



**United States Department of the Interior  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Fire Management Branch  
National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 South Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705**




Refer to: FMB160006

**January 4, 2016**

**Memorandum**

To: Regional Fire Management Coordinators, Regions 1-8

From: Chief, Branch of Fire Management 

Subject: 2016 Guidance for Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy  
Memorandum 2011-2, Department of the Interior Fire Boot Stipend

This memorandum provides eligibility requirements and payment procedures for the wildland fire boot stipend and supersedes the Branch of Fire Management memorandum FMB150000 dated October 30, 2014.

The payment of a one-hundred dollar (\$100) annual stipend, based on a calendar year, is authorized for employees holding a valid incident qualification card with a fitness rating of moderate or arduous as outlined in Attachment 1 - Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy Memorandum 2011-2, Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend. Validity of the incident qualification card is determined by the fitness expiration date on the card. This authorization includes permanent full-time, term, career conditional, pathways, temporary, collateral duty, and casual employees hired using the administratively determined hiring authority.

The unit's fire management officers are responsible for determining who is eligible for the stipend, offering the stipend to all eligible employees, and tracking who receives the boot stipend each calendar year. The boot stipend payment is considered a taxable fringe benefit and shall be processed in accordance with Attachment 2 – Service Boot Stipend Payment Procedures.

Any further questions regarding this program should be directed to Reah Reedy, Administrative Officer, Fire Management Branch at 208-387-5736 or Ted Mason, FWS National Fire Safety Specialist at 208-387-5831.

**Attachments**

cc:

Cynthia Martinez, Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System  
Jeff Rupert, Chief, Division of Natural Resources and Conservation Planning  
Rebekah Giddings (WO-HR)  
Casual Payment Center (CPC)




# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

OCT 14 2011

## Memorandum

To: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Director, Bureau of Land Management  
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Director, National Park Service

From: Kim A. Thorsen, Deputy Assistant Secretary – Law Enforcement, Security, and  
Emergency Management 

Subject: Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy Memorandum 2011-2  
Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recently settled an arbitration case with the Federal Indian Service Employees (FISE) regarding the purchase of wildland fire boots. During the proceedings, the attorney for FISE wrote to the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health in the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), contending "... the Department of the Interior pays for these boots for the wildland firefighters employed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (almost all of whom are non-Indian) while it forces the predominately American Indian firefighting crews who work alongside them to pay for their own boots." The FISE asked the DOL to "escalate this to the Secretarial level and ask Secretary Solis to contact Secretary Salazar directly" for "prompt attention" and an "immediate response" from the Department of the Interior (DOI) to their complaint.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) establishes wildland fire standards for use by the bureaus and the NWCG Wildland Fire Boot standard has been adopted by each bureau as appropriate for safe work on the fireline. The NWCG concluded that protective footwear is very personal in nature and can be used by employees off the job site. Therefore, appropriate boots should be a condition of employment for firefighting positions. Boots should be purchased by the employee prior to employment.

Within the DOI, guidelines for purchasing boots for firefighters have indeed varied by bureau. However, the bureaus and Office of Wildland Fire, in consultation with the USDA Forest Service, have reached a consensus on the appropriate level and mechanism for providing financial assistance to all employees who, as a condition of employment, are required to purchase wildland fire boots. Our new policy will allow a \$100.00 per year stipend to qualified firefighters as described in the attachment. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Kirk Rowdabaugh, 202-606-3447.

Attachment: Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy Memorandum 2011-2,  
Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend

**Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy 2011-2**  
**Wildland Fire Boot Stipend**

**Purpose:**

To provide Departmental guidance to the bureaus and offices on the payment of a yearly stipend to employees for wildland fire boots.

**Background:**

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) establishes wildland fire standards for use by the bureaus, and the NWCG Wildland Fire Boot standard has been adopted by each bureau as appropriate for safe work on the fireline. The NWCG has also concluded that protective footwear is very personal in nature and can be used by employees off the job site. Therefore, appropriate boots should be a condition of employment for firefighting positions and should be purchased by the employee prior to employment.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all bureaus and offices within the Department, and to all employees, regardless of their employment status.

**Time Frame:**

This policy is effective January 1, 2012 and remains in effect until rescinded or modified.

**Policy:**

The payment of a one-hundred dollar (\$100.00) per year stipend is authorized for employees holding a valid Incident Qualification Card with a Fitness Rating of moderate or arduous, and who, as a condition of employment, are required to purchase wildland fire boots that satisfy the standards described in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* and the *Wildland Fire and Aviation Program Management and Operations Guide (BIA)*. Validity of the Incident Qualification Card is determined by the Fitness Expiration date on the card.

Personnel hired under the Administratively-Determined (AD) authority who qualify will receive the stipend at time of payment following their first fire assignment in an IQCS qualified position requiring an arduous or moderate fitness rating in each calendar year. DOI bureaus and offices will follow established payment processes for disbursement of stipends for all other personnel assigned to wildland fires.



Kim A. Thorsen  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Law Enforcement, Security and Emergency Management

10/14/11  
Date

**Distribution:**

Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Director, Bureau of Land Management  
Director, Fish & Wildlife Service  
Director, National Park Service  
DOI Fire Executive Council  
DOI Bureau Fire Directors

## 2016 Boot Stipend Payment Procedures

The Unit's Zone Fire Management Officers (ZFMOs) are responsible for:

- Determining who is eligible for the stipend.
- Offering the stipend to all eligible employees including AD's.
- Tracking who receives the boot stipend each calendar year.

To ensure that duplicate payments are not made, supervisors of transferred employees should check with the employee's previous home unit before issuing the annual stipend.

The boot stipend payment is considered a taxable fringe benefit and shall be processed as follows:

### **Permanent Full Time Employees (PFT), Term, Career Seasonal, Pathways, and Temporary Employees**

Preparedness and Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) funded employees, submit boot stipend requests by mailing a completed FWS Form 3-206 (See Attachment 3) to the Interior Business Center (IBC) identifying the home unit cost center and the sub-activity used to fund the employee's base salary with "00" as the regional identifier and the project code of **FFBT0 for preparedness or use a W (WUI) or an N (Non-WUI) in front of FFBT (e.g. WFFBT or NFFBT) for HFR** (FF.F31) project code.

For eligible collateral duty employees whose base salary is non-fire funded, the annual stipend will be paid for using the applicable Preparedness or HFR funds. If a collateral duty employee's home unit does not receive preparedness or HFR funding, then the cost center for that employee should reflect the ZFMO's home unit.

### **Administratively Determined (AD) Employees**

It is required to offer the boot stipend to AD employees hired into a position requiring a moderate or arduous fitness rating. To process the boot stipend for an AD, the home/hiring unit should follow the steps below.

- Complete FWS Form 3-206 with authorized signature. A digital signature is acceptable.
- Attach FWS Form 3-206 to casual's Emergency Firefighter Time Report (OF-288).
- Indicate in the Remarks/Commissary section of the OF-288 the current year, "Boot Stipend" and the amount of the reimbursable (\$100).
- Identify the cost string used to charge the boot stipend.
- Send the FWS Form 3-206 and the OF-288 to the DOI Casual Payment Center (CPC).

The Home/Hiring Unit Cost Accounting Code on the OF-288 shall include the hiring unit's cost center, "00" as the regional identifier of Home/Hiring Unit, and the project code of **ADBT0**. The Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) should reference either suppression (FF.F2) with project code ADBT0 **or use a W (WUI) or an N (Non-WUI) in front of ADBT (e.g. WADBT or NADBT) for HFR** (FF.F31) project code.

The CPC will track the entry to eliminate duplicate reimbursement in the same calendar year.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Memorandum

To: National Business Center  
Payroll Operations  
P.O. Box 272030  
Mail Code: **D-2661**  
Denver, Colorado 80227

From: Fish and Wildlife Service  
Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Report of Taxable Benefit (**Firefighter Boot Stipend  
Reimbursement**)

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Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: IN Bureau: 15 Subbureau: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of Entitlement:  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (not to exceed \$100 annual)

Cost Structure Number: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
(Work Breakdown Structure) (Fund) (Cost Center)

Fiscal Officer: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature and Title)

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature and Title)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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